

"I loved THE KILLING JOKE...  
It's my favorite. It's the  
first comic I've ever loved."

— Tim Burton

SMILE!

ALAN MOORE  
BRIAN BOLLAND  
**BATMAN**  
**THE KILLING JOKE**  
THE DELUXE EDITION

INTRODUCTION  
BY TIM SALE





**BATMAN** THE KILLING JOKE  
THE DELUXE EDITION

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Batman: The Killing Joke: The Deluxe Edition

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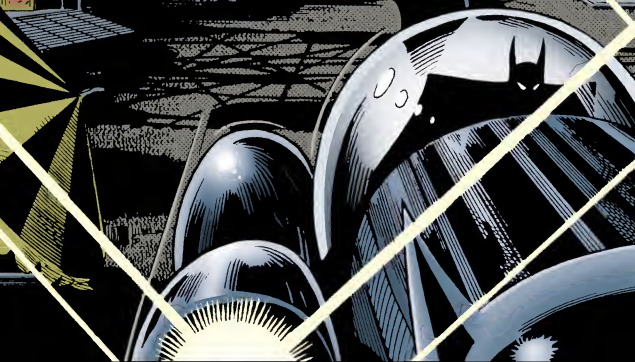
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# BATMAN<sup>THE</sup> KILLING JOKE THE DELUXE EDITION

Alan Moore writer Brian Bolland Art and Colors Richard Starkings Letterer

Introduction by Tim Sale Afterword by Brian Bolland

Batman created by Bob Kane



## INTRODUCTION

Man, how cool is this?

Like everyone who was in the mainstream comics field in the late 1980s, or — as was my case — had their noses pressed against the glass, the back-to-back-to-back-to-back of *DARK KNIGHT RETURNS*, *WATCHMEN*, *BATMAN: YEAR ONE*, and *BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE*, completely reenergized the field. The characters (other than those in *WATCHMEN*) had been around for decades and, while many talented writers and artists had done much notable work in that time, there was an incredible sense of the new coming from Frank Miller and this handful of crazy Brits — Alan Moore, Brian Bolland, John Higgins, Richard Starkings and Dave Gibbons — who were seeing possibilities in them, in the kinds of stories that could be told, and not incidentally, in the way that a story could be presented.

*BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE* is the only one of the stories listed above that did not first exist in another format, as a series of comics that were eventually collected into that catch-all term, a "graphic novel." *THE KILLING JOKE* was a 46-page story, but it was crafted at such an astonishing level, and printed so much more cleanly and carefully, that it seemed to be a different beast altogether, not just a really great Batman comic, but something different. I didn't get it then, but I do now.

That is what authors of extraordinary craft can do: make the old seem new.

And thrilling. Don't forget thrilling.

I am told that the origins of *BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE* go back to a Batman/Judge Dredd proposal that Moore and Bolland had cooked up. When it fell through, Moore asked Bolland what else he wanted to do, and Bolland said, "The Joker, please."

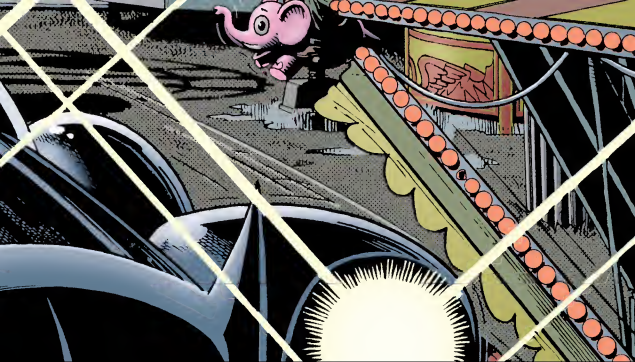
So polite. And thus a classic was born.

Moore is famous for many things, not the least of which are his maniacally controlled and precisely orchestrated scripts, requiring an equal and similar effort from his artist partner, and in the amazing Brian Bolland he found an artist his equal in talent, fanaticism, care, and expressiveness. Both excel in impressing with their rendering of the mundane, so that it never *feels* mundane. And then they blast into a reveal, a money shot so explosive that is it only then that you realize how well you, as a reader, have been lulled to rest *on purpose*, just to set you up.

The Joker's reveal on page 11, the tragic event on page 18, the second reveal on page 37, all orchestrated and carried out in ways that astonish, and then astonish again when you go back and see just how much these artists have known and set things up from the beginning. How fun it is to be in the hands of creators who know so much about what they are doing.

Oh, and the joke (how cool is it that the book ends with a joke) at the finish?





Priceless, funny, and perfect for the characters of Batman and The Joker.

What you hold in your hands, though, is not the book that I own, that so inflamed(!) me and thousands of others back in 1988, because of one crucial element: the coloring.

This time around, you lucky buggers, you have the fantastic treat to see the book colored by the artist himself, and see his more complete vision of how the story should look. Side by side, the comparison is amazing.

Bolland's colors are characteristically thoughtful and restrained. They fit the work more completely than Higgins's state-of-the-art job in 1988 and are a joy to look at. Slow down and one can see how cool the palette is now, versus the warmer one of 1988, and how much better that reflects the somber tone of the story, and how, when Bolland retains a color from 1988 that has become iconic, like Barbara's yellow shirt, he integrates that so well into the cooler colors in the scene, allowing the shirt to really pop and ratchet up the horror of the event.

But the biggest and most amazing change in this newly colored edition is in the flashback sequences.

Bolland washes out all color in each one, but chooses to spotlight an object in each — a bowl of tentacles, shrimp, and so on — in increasingly

intense shades of red, all leading up to (here's that sense that everything has been planned from the start by masterful hands) the Red Hood that was posited to be The Joker's mostly forgotten origin, way back in 1951, and the transformation of the milquetoast failed comedian to insane criminal mastermind.

Brrrrrr. I just got chills.

Anyone else get chills?

Man, how cool is this?

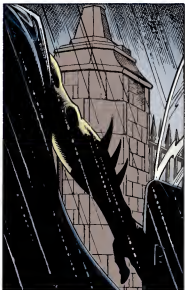
Tim Sale

Pasadena, CA 2008

*Tim Sale lives in southern California with his aged dogs Hotspur and Shelby. Raised in Seattle, he still finds California an odd place, though he hopes that will change someday.*

*Tim is the artist on BATMAN: DARK VICTORY, CATWOMAN: WHEN IN ROME, BATMAN: THE LONG HALLOWEEN and many other titles.*

*In 2006, Tim became the artist for the hit NBC television series Heroes.*





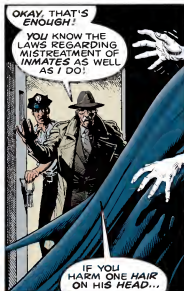


THERE WERE THESE TWO  
GUYS IN A LUNATIC  
ASYLUM...













"WHERE IS HE?"

AH! THERE YOU ARE!

HAVE YOU HAD A CHANCE TO INSPECT THE PROPERTY AND DECIDE IF IT'S WHAT YOU WERE LOOKING FOR?

WELL, IT'S GARISH, UGLY, AND DERELICTS HAVE USED IT FOR A TOILET.

THE RIDES ARE DILAPIDATED TO THE POINT OF BEING LETHAL, AND COULD EASILY MAIM OR KILL INNOCENT LITTLE CHILDREN.

OH. SO YOU DON'T LIKE IT?



DON'T LIKE IT?

I'M CRAZY FOR IT.

YOU...? YOU REALLY WANT TO BUY IT? AND THE PRICE I MENTIONED, IT ISN'T TOO STEEP...?

TOO STEEP? MY DEAR SIR, AS I LOOK AT IT I'M MAKING A KILLING...

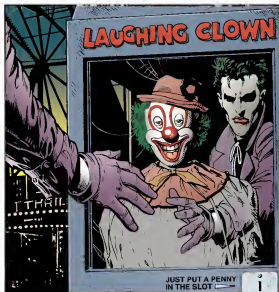
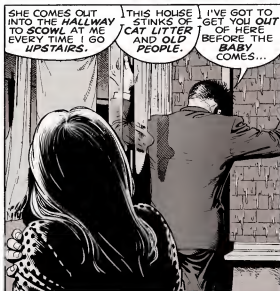


...AND ANYWAY, MONEY ISN'T REALLY A PROBLEM.

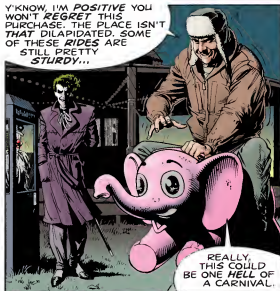


NOT THESE DAYS.





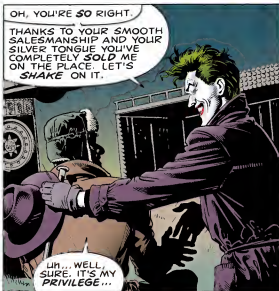
Y'KNOW, I'M **POSITIVE** YOU WON'T **REGRET** THIS **PURCHASE**. THE PLACE ISN'T **THAT** **DILAPIDATED**. SOME OF THESE **RIDES** ARE **STILL** **PRETTY** **STURDY**...



REALLY, THIS COULD BE ONE **HELL** OF A **CARNIVAL**.

OH, YOU'RE **SO** **RIGHT**.

THANKS TO YOUR **SMOOTH** **SALESMANSHIP** AND YOUR **SILVER TONGUE** YOU'VE **COMPLETELY SOLD** ME ON THE **PLACE**. LET'S **SHAKE** ON IT.



UH... WELL, SURE. IT'S MY **PRIVILEGE**...

INDEED IT IS.

NATURALLY. I WON'T BE **PAYING** YOU ANYTHING. MY **COLLEAGUES** **PERSUADED** YOUR **PARTNER** TO SIGN THE **NECESSARY** **DOCUMENTS** JUST **OVER** AN **HOUR** **AGO**.

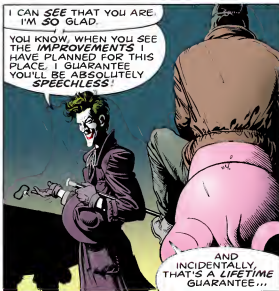
THE **PROPERTY'S** **MINE** **ALREADY**.



YOU'RE **HAPPY** WITH THAT, I TAKE IT?

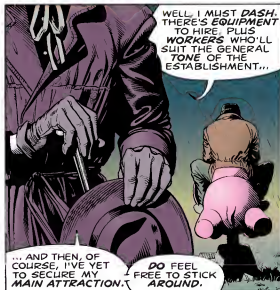
I CAN SEE THAT YOU ARE. I'M **SO** **GLAD**.

YOU KNOW, WHEN YOU SEE THE **IMPROVEMENTS** I HAVE **PLANNED** FOR THIS **PLACE**, I **GUARANTEE** YOU'LL BE **ABSOLUTELY** **SPEECHLESS**!



AND **INCIDENTALLY**, THAT'S A **LIFETIME** **GUARANTEE**...

WELL, I MUST **DASH**. THERE'S **EQUIPMENT** TO **HIRE**, PLUS **WORKERS** WHO'LL **SUIT** THE **GENERAL** **TO** **THE** **ESTABLISHMENT**...



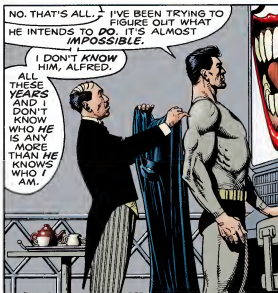
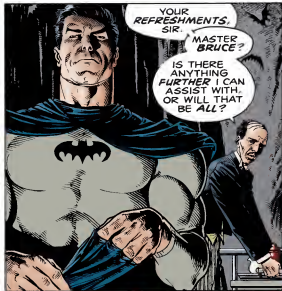
... AND THEN, OF **COURSE**, I'VE **YET** TO **SECURE** MY **MAIN** **ATTRACTION**.

DO **FEEL** **FREE** TO **STICK** **AROUND**.

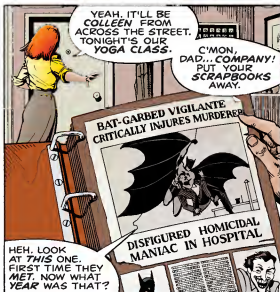
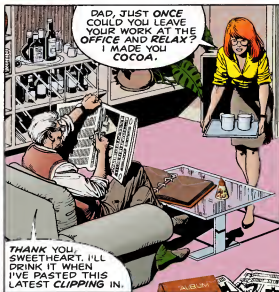
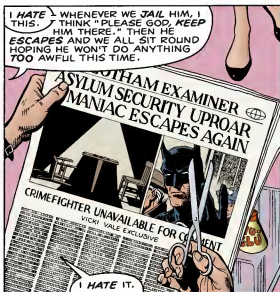


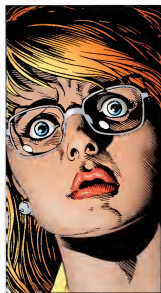


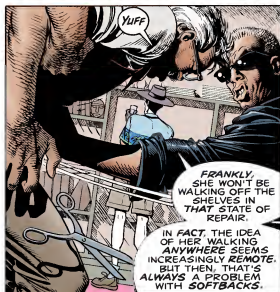


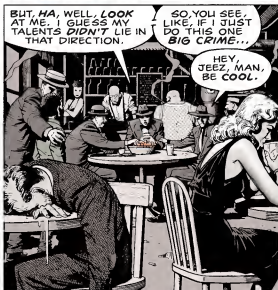




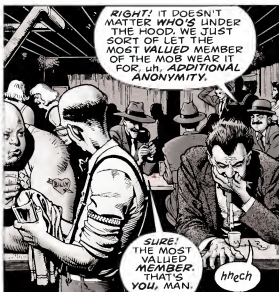










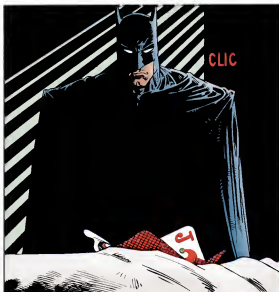
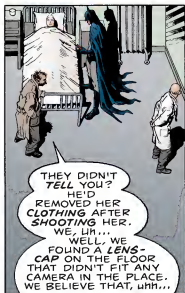
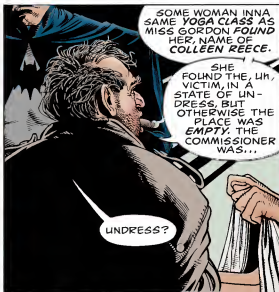
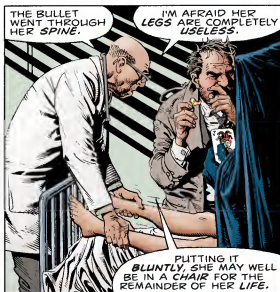


NO, NO, OF COURSE I MEAN, IT'S NOT, YOU'RE RIGHT, JUST THIS ONCE, THEN I CAN SWITCH NEIGHBORHOODS AND START A PROPER LIFE...



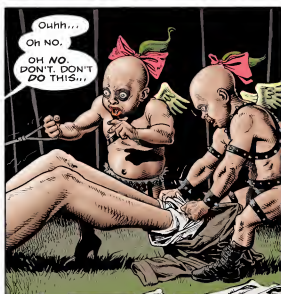
SURE, SURE, WHY NOT? HA HA! AND THEN, STARTING FROM FRIDAY IT IS. SATURDAY MORNING, I'LL BE RICH. I CAN'T IMAGINE IT, MY LIFE'S GOING TO BE COMPLETELY CHANGED!

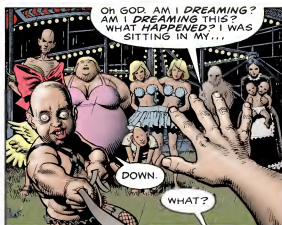












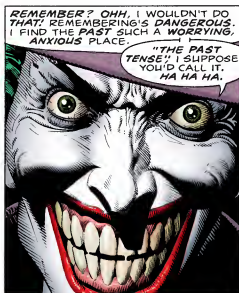


YOU.

Oh NO.

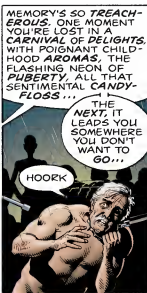
I...

REMEMBER.



REMEMBER? OHH, I WOULDN'T DO THAT! REMEMBERING'S DANGEROUS. I FIND THE PAST SUCH A WORRYING, ANXIOUS PLACE.

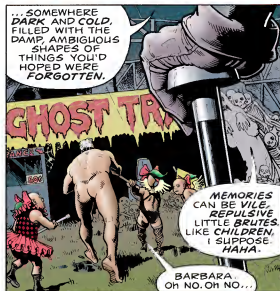
"THE PAST TENSE" I SUPPOSE YOU'D CALL IT. HA HA HA.



MEMORY'S SO TREACHEROUS. ONE MOMENT YOU'RE LOST IN A CARNIVAL OF DELIGHTS, WITH POIGNANT CHILDHOOD AROMAS, THE FLASHING NEON OF PUBERTY, ALL THAT SENTIMENTAL CANDY-FLOSS...

THE NEXT, IT LEADS YOU SOMEWHERE YOU DON'T WANT TO GO...

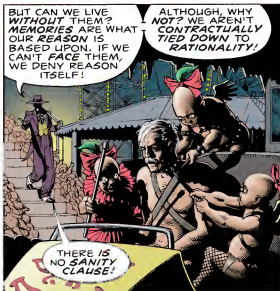
HOORK



...SOMEWHERE DARK AND COLD, FILLED WITH THE DAMP, AMBIGUOUS SHAPES OF THINGS YOU'D HOPED WERE FORGOTTEN.

MEMORIES CAN BE VILE, REPULSIVE LITTLE BRUTES, LIKE CHILDREN, I SUPPOSE. HAHA.

BARBARA. OH NO. OH NO...



BUT CAN WE LIVE WITHOUT THEM? MEMORIES ARE WHAT OUR REASON IS BASED UPON. IF WE CAN'T FACE THEM, WE DENY REASON ITSELF!

ALTHOUGH, WHY NOT? WE AREN'T CONTRACTUALLY TIED DOWN TO RATIONALITY!

THERE IS NO SANITY CLAUSE!



SO WHEN YOU FIND YOURSELF LOCKED ONTO AN UNPLEASANT TRAIN OF THOUGHT, HEADING FOR THE PLACES IN YOUR PAST WHERE THE SCREAMING IS UNBEARABLE, REMEMBER THERE'S ALWAYS MADNESS.

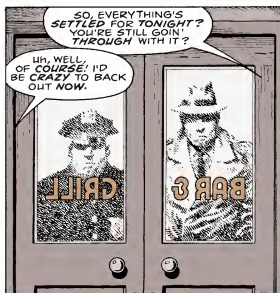
MADNESS IS THE EMERGENCY EXIT...

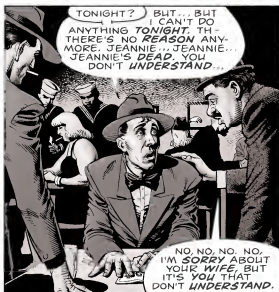


YOU CAN JUST STEP OUTSIDE, AND CLOSE THE DOOR ON ALL THOSE DREAFFUL THINGS THAT HAPPENED. YOU CAN LOCK THEM AWAY...

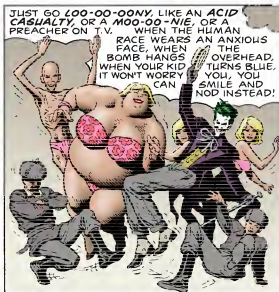
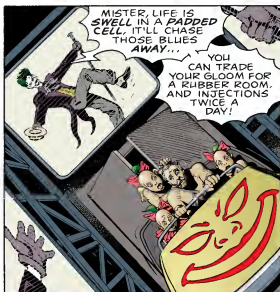
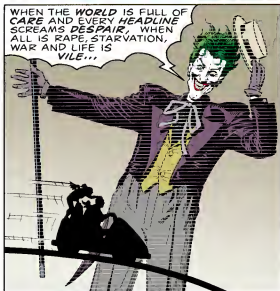
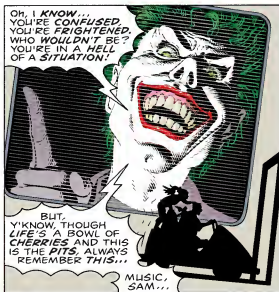
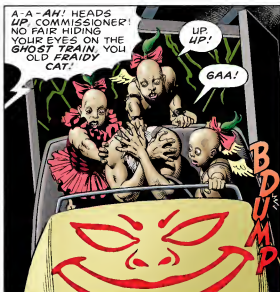
FOREVER.

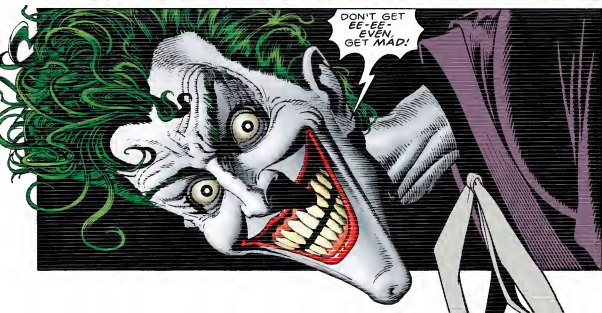
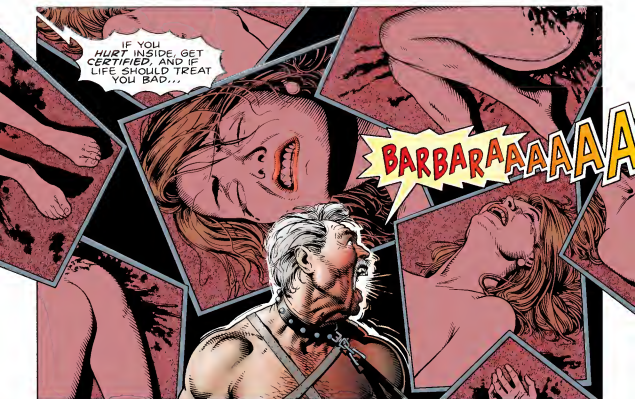
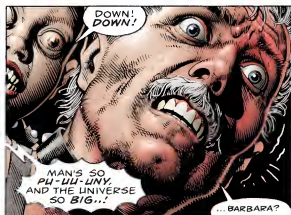


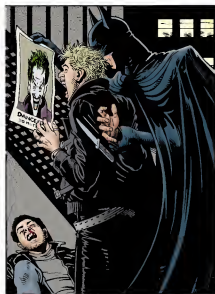


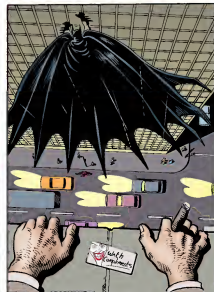






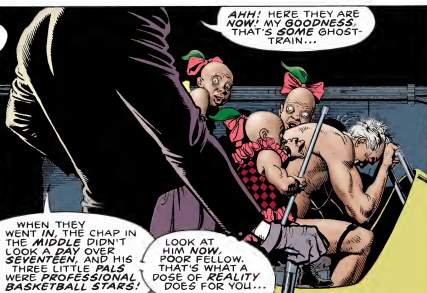






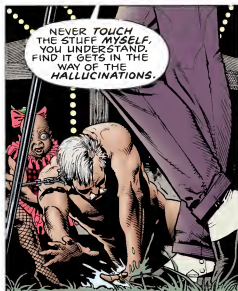


# BOUMP



WHEN THEY WENT IN, THE CHAP IN THE MIDDLE DIDN'T LOOK A DAY OVER SEVENTEEN, AND HIS THREE LITTLE PALS WERE PROFESSIONAL BASKETBALL STARS!

LOOK AT HIM NOW, POOR FELLOW. THAT'S WHAT A DOSE OF REALITY DOES FOR YOU...



NEVER TOUCH THE STUFF MYSELF, YOU UNDERSTAND. FIND IT GETS IN THE WAY OF THE HALLUCINATIONS.

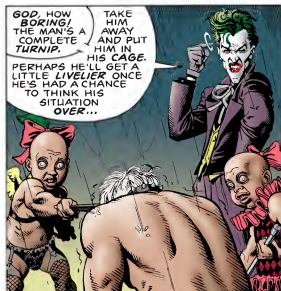


WHY, HELLO, COMMISSIONER! HOW'S THINGS?

COMMISSIONER?

HELLO?

ANYBODY HOME?

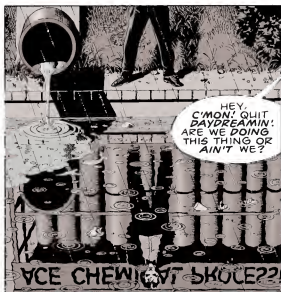


GOD, HOW BORING! THE MAN'S A COMPLETE TURNIP.

TAKE HIM AWAY AND PUT HIM IN HIS CAGE. PERHAPS HE'LL GET A LITTLE LIVELIER ONCE HE'S HAD A CHANCE TO THINK HIS SITUATION OVER...



...TO REFLECT UPON LIFE, AND ALL ITS RANDOM INJUSTICE.



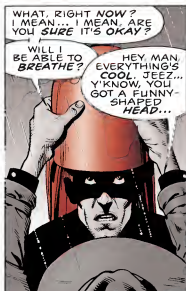
HEY.  
C'MON! QUIT  
DAYDREAMIN'.  
ARE WE DOING  
THIS THING OR  
AIN'T WE?



UH, YES. YES.  
OF COURSE.

I WAS, I WAS JUST  
REMEMBERING...  
I USED TO WALK  
ALONG HERE ON THE  
WAY TO WORK EACH  
MORNING...

YEAH,  
YEAH.  
NOW PUT  
THIS  
SUCKER  
ON, MAN.  
AN' SHUT  
UP.



WHAT, RIGHT NOW?  
I MEAN... I MEAN, ARE  
YOU SURE IT'S OKAY?

WILL I  
BE ABLE TO  
BREATHE?

HEY, MAN,  
EVERYTHING'S  
COOL, JEEZ...  
Y'KNOW, YOU  
GOT A FUNNY-  
SHAPED  
HEAD...



THERE.  
YOU STILL SEE  
OKAY, MAN?

WH, WELL, YEAH.  
I GUESS, EXCEPT EVERY-  
THING'S RED...  
IT'S KINDA  
STUFFY TOO, AND IT  
SMELLS FUNNY. DOES  
MY VOICE SOUND  
ECHOY TO YOU?



YOU  
SOUND  
GREAT.  
NOW... HOW  
ABOUT  
GLIDIN' US  
THROUGH  
THIS  
STINKIN'  
FACTORY  
TO THE  
JOINT  
NEXT  
DOOR?

SURE, SURE  
THING. Y'KNOW...  
THIS FEELS  
KINDA  
WEIRD, LIKE  
A DREAM.  
I KEEP  
REMEMBERING  
JEANNIE...

WATCH  
OUT, MAN.  
STEPS.



OKAY... WE GO  
THROUGH HERE,  
PAST THE FILTER  
TANKS, AND THEN  
MONARCH ARCH PLAYING  
CARDS IS JUST  
BEYOND A  
PARTITION.

Y'KNOW,  
THIS PLACE...  
IT LOOKS  
EVEN WORSE  
IN RED. IT  
LOOKS  
LIKE...

HEY, YOU!  
FREEEEZE!



C'MON,  
C'MON, GET  
'EM UP!

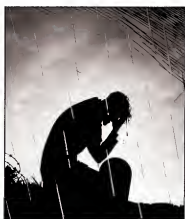
YOU  
ASSHOLE! YOU  
SAID THERE WAS  
NO SECURITY!

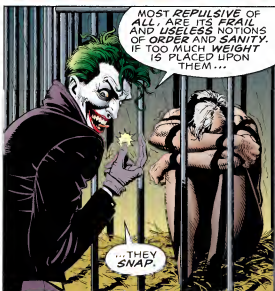
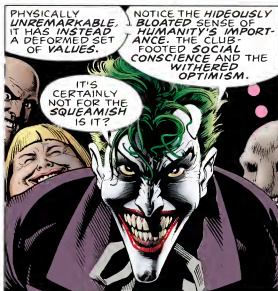
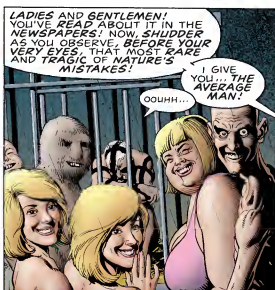
THEY...  
THEY MUST HAVE  
ALTERED THINGS  
SINCE I LEFT...



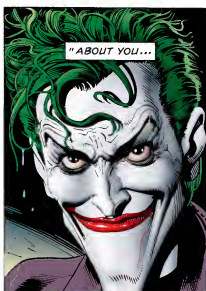
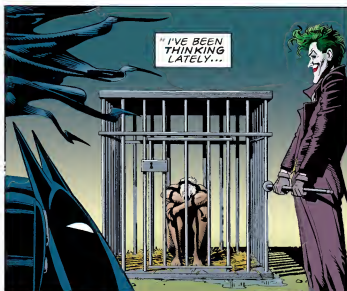




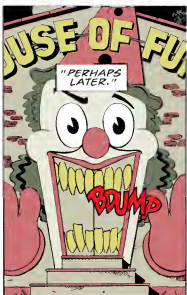
















SO... I SEE YOU RECEIVED THE FREE TICKET I SENT YOU.

I'M GLAD. I DID SO WANT YOU TO BE HERE.



YOU SEE, IT DOESN'T MATTER IF YOU CATCH ME AND SEND ME BACK TO THE ASYLUM...

GORDON'S BEEN DRIVEN MAD.

I'VE PROVED MY POINT.



I'VE DEMONSTRATED THERE'S NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ME AND EVERYONE ELSE!

ALL IT TAKES IS ONE BAD DAY TO REDUCE THE SANEST MAN ALIVE TO LUNACY.

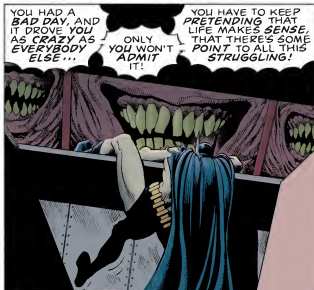
THAT'S HOW FAR THE WORLD IS FROM WHERE I AM. JUST ONE BAD DAY.



YOU HAD A BAD DAY ONCE, AM I RIGHT?

I KNOW! AM. I CAN TELL. YOU HAD A BAD DAY AND EVERYTHING CHANGED.

WHY ELSE WOULD YOU DRESS UP LIKE A FLYING RAT?



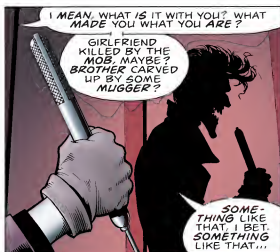
YOU HAD A BAD DAY, AND IT DROVE YOU AS CRAZY AS EVERYBODY ELSE...

ONLY YOU WON'T ADMIT IT!

YOU HAVE TO KEEP PRETENDING THAT LIFE MAKES SENSE, THAT THERE'S SOME POINT TO ALL THIS STRUGGLING!



GOD, YOU MAKE ME WANT TO PUKE.

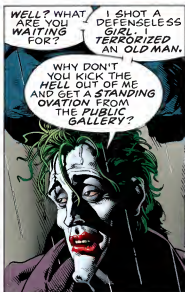








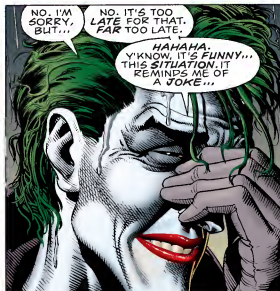
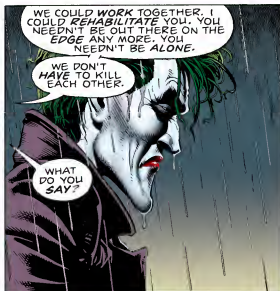
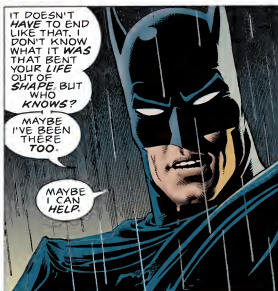


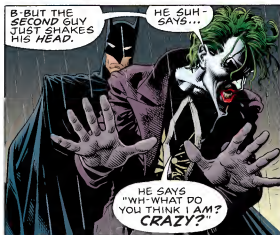
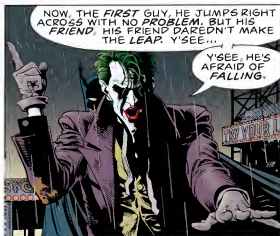
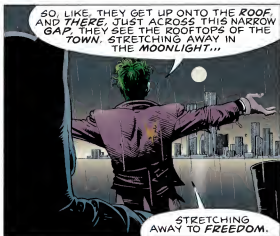
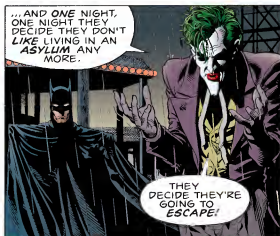


BECAUSE I'M DOING THIS ONE BY THE BOOK...

...AND BECAUSE I DON'T WANT TO.











#### AFTERWORD


I've been asked to write the "afterword" to this book — or should that be the "in between"? I'm told by my editor Bob Harras that there's room for up to 800 words. If I go on longer we have to start dropping pages of art and we wouldn't want that, would we? So, reader, if I should stop in mid-sentence it's because I've run out of space.

I've just read Tim Sale's generous introduction. Of all the introductions I've ever received, it's without doubt the most...recent. Having just sat with my 11-year old son watching the hit TV show *Heroes*, it's pretty cool being introduced by its star artist. It seems additionally cool to me that all the writing in this book has been given over not to writers but to artists, a breed of people not known for their ability to string a sentence together — but so far so good.

There's a minor detail that Tim got wrong, actually. It was me that asked Alan to write the book and not the other way round. *THE KILLING JOKE* was not a project instigated by Alan, nor was it, as far as I know, a labor of love for him, and it doesn't usually appear in a list of his greatest works. I was glad he agreed to write it, though. At the time we'd known each other for quite a while and narrowly missed working together a couple of times. In a peculiar form of homage to him I haven't drawn a comic book story written by any other writer in the last 22 years. When you've worked with the best, anything else would seem like a backward step.







The script for *THE KILLING JOKE* was very good, but I must admit I had to grit my teeth a couple of times during the drawing of it. I, for instance, would never have chosen to reveal a Joker origin. I think of this as just one of a number of possible origin stories manifesting itself in the Joker's fevered brain. Also, I wouldn't have done such terrible harm to poor Barbara. The story, though, does contain some great iconic moments, my favorite being the scene when the Joker discovers that the gun — as far as we know the same one that maimed Barbara — is empty. People seemed to find the last page of the story ambiguous, so before I conclude this text, remind me to reveal what actually happened.

The most notable absentee from this edition is *THE KILLING JOKE*'s original colorist, John Higgins, and I want to thank him for jumping in when he did and finishing the book so promptly. Back in the pre-computer days of "blue line," airbrush and poster colors, even though I had specific views on how I wanted it to look, I wouldn't have been able to color it myself. It's probably well known that John's choice of colors turned out to be startlingly at odds with what I had in mind so, in February 2007, when Bob Harris told me about this edition, I said, "PLEASE can I recolor the whole thing?"

Technical wizard Jeb Woodard sent me files of the line art which, through some computer alchemy only he understands, he'd isolated from the printed color pages — the original *KILLING JOKE* artwork has long since disappeared into the hands of collectors — and as I got on with the coloring process on my Mac it was tempting and easy to make changes to the line art itself — a bit of feathering here, a completely redrawn face there. The eagle-eyed may notice that every page has something slightly different on it from

*THE KILLING JOKE* of 20 years ago. There's at least one figure that wasn't there the first time around. Think of it as a Spot-the-Difference book.

"An Innocent Guy" (that's what it's called even though it doesn't say so on it) is of special significance to me. As I became less inclined to work with writers or colorists it was particularly tempting to write a Batman story that was, for better or worse, completely by me. It gave me the opportunity to draw all the scenes I hadn't had a chance to draw in *THE KILLING JOKE*, including my homage to the unsettlingly surreal Dick Sprang-era Batman that I loved as a kid but combine it with a darker, more morally ambiguous theme that I'd stolen shamelessly from other sources. In so doing I managed to upset at least one mother of a seven-year-old boy who wrote me a letter of protest. Jeb supervised the meticulous painting out of the Zipatone that covered the artwork for the original black and white printing (he didn't quite get it all, you'll see bits of it lingering here and there) and I colored it up for the first time ever. I hope you enjoy these and the preceding 46 pages.

Speaking of which, it's time I revealed what really happened at the end of *THE KILLING JOKE*: as our protagonists stood there in the rain laughing at the final joke, the police lights reflecting in the pools of filthy water underfoot, the Batman's hand reached out and.....

Brian Bolland

Not far from Six Mile Bottom, UK 2008

I DON'T CONSIDER MYSELF  
A BAD PERSON.

ON THE WHOLE I  
CONSIDER MYSELF A  
GOOD PERSON.



I'M GOOD TO MY PARENTS.  
I TREAT MY GIRL RIGHT... TAKE  
HER OUT AND BUY HER STUFF.  
AND I GO TO CHURCH  
EVERY SUNDAY.



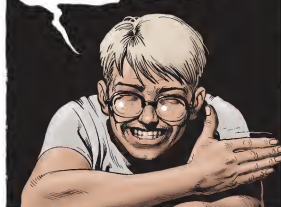
BUT I'VE DECIDED THAT JUST  
ONCE I WANNA DO A REALLY  
BAD THING. I MEAN A REALLY  
SERIOUSLY BAD THING.



'CAUSE, YA KNOW, LIKE, WE'RE PUT ON THIS  
EARTH WITH FREE WILL. WE CAN CHOOSE TO  
DO THIS OR THAT. WE CAN CHOOSE TO BE  
GOOD OR BAD. BUT SOMETIMES I THINK  
MOST PEOPLE ARE GOOD AND NOT BAD  
ONLY BECAUSE THEY'RE SCARED  
THEY MIGHT GO TO JAIL OR HELL  
OR SOMEPAGE.

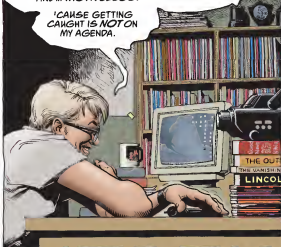


SOME GUY ONCE SAID: "ANYTHING DONE OUT  
OF FEAR HAS NO MORAL VALUE." WELL, I THINK  
THAT'S RIGHT. I FIGURE THE ONLY WAY YOU  
CAN BE TRULY GOOD IS IF YOU'VE TRIED  
BEING GOOD, AND YOU'VE TRIED BEING  
BAD, AND BEING GOOD  
FEELS BETTER.



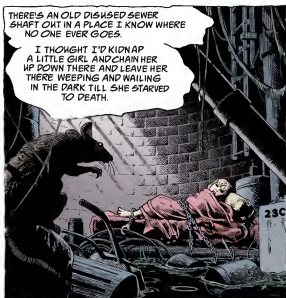
SO WHAT IS IT TO BE, THIS ONE BAD THING?  
IT'S GOTTA BE SOMETHING COMPLETELY CRUEL  
AND HORRIBLE... AND UNNECESSARY... AND...  
AND... MOTIVELESS.

'CAUSE GETTING  
CAUGHT IS NOT ON  
MY AGENDA.



THERE'S AN OLD DISUSED SEWER  
SHAFT OUT IN A PLACE I KNOW WHERE  
NO ONE EVER GOES.

I THOUGHT I'D KIDNAP  
A LITTLE GIRL AND CHAIN HER  
UP DOWN THERE AND LEAVE HER  
THERE WEeping AND WAILING  
IN THE DARK TILL SHE STARVED  
TO DEATH.



YA GOTTA UNDERSTAND I'M NOT SOME KIND  
OF PERVERT OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT, BUT  
WHATEVER I CAN DO TO MAKE HER  
ORDEAL WORSE AND RUIN THE LIVES  
OF HER FAMILY, I'LL DO.

BUT SOMEHOW THIS  
ISN'T ENOUGH.

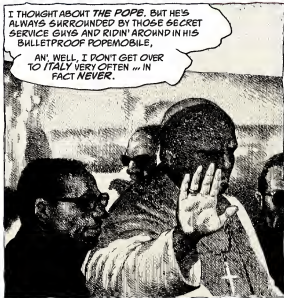


IT'S GOTTA BE A BIGGER THING  
SOMEHOW. SOMETHING THAT'LL LEAVE  
A MARK ON MORE PEOPLE LIKE  
THE KILLING OF JOHN LENNON. IT'S  
GOTTA BE SOMEBODY  
FAMOUS.



I THOUGHT ABOUT THE POPE. BUT HE'S  
ALWAYS SURROUNDED BY THOSE SECKET  
SERVICE GUYS AND RIDIN' AROUND IN HIS  
BULLETPROOF POPEMOBILE,

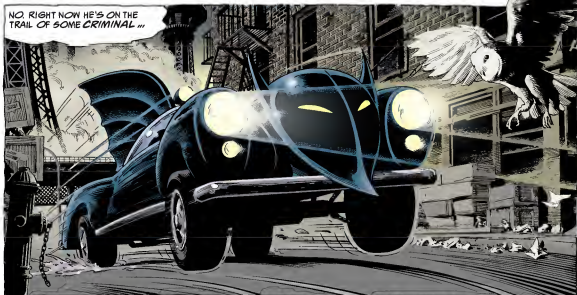
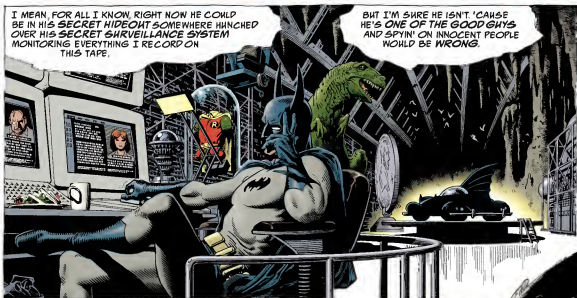
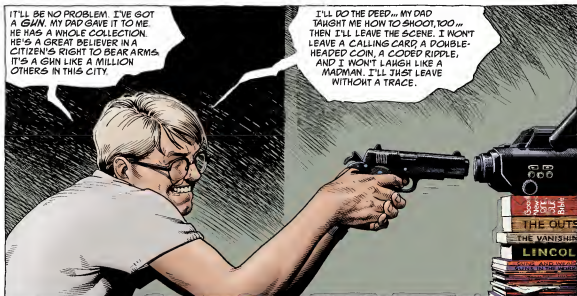
AN', WELL, I DON'T GET OVER  
TO ITALY VERY OFTEN ... IN  
FACT NEVER.



I'VE GOTTA CHOOSE MY VICTIM FOR  
THE SAKE OF CONVENIENCE. IT'S GOTTA  
BE SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T HAVE AN  
ARMED GUARD. SOMEONE RIGHT  
HERE IN GOTHAM.

IT'S GOTTA BE THE BATMAN.







HIS GREAT BAT-WINGS  
UNFURLED AGAINST  
THE NIGHT SKY...

STRIKING TERROR INTO THE  
HEARTS OF THE GUILTY,

AN INSPIRATION AND  
A COMFORT TO THE  
INNOCENT.

HE'LL BE SADLY MISSED

ESPECIALLY BY ME.

ONE DAY HE'LL BE FACE TO FACE  
WITH TWO-FACE...

OR HE'LL BE TANGLING WITH  
POISON IVY...

OR IN THE LAIR OF... THOSE  
THREE GHYLS WITH ANIMAL  
MASKS WHOSE NAMES I  
CAN NEVER REMEMBER!






THE GOOD GUY'LL MAKE  
A DRAMATIC EXIT

LEAVING THE BAD GUY  
TO PONDER THE ERROR  
OF HIS WAYS.

'CAUSE, LET'S FACE IT,  
CRIME DOESN'T PAY.



AND JUST FOR ONE MOMENT  
THE BATMAN WILL PAUSE. THEN  
HIS FACE ILLUMINATED BY A SINGLE  
LIGHT... A SPLENDID AVENGER  
OF THE NIGHT.

AND THEN FROM A DARK ALLEY,

OR A WINDOW  
HIGH UP,

OR A GRASSY  
KNOLL,

OR SOME OTHER  
PLACE,

THERE'LL BE  
A GLINT,

AND THEN



**BANG**







AND HE'LL  
BE DEAD.



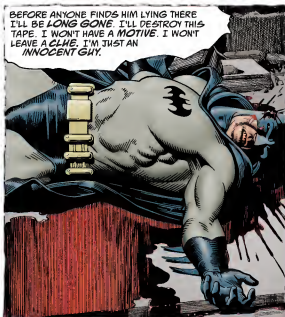
YES, I SHALL MISS  
HIM ALL RIGHT.

I DON'T MEAN, I WON'T  
HIT HIM. NO, THE BULLET'LL  
FIND ITS MARK ALL RIGHT.

BUT, AS I SAID  
BEFORE I'LL MISS  
HIM.

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN HIS  
GREATEST FAN.

I'M ALSO HIS  
GREATEST ENEMY.



BEFORE ANYONE FINDS HIM LYING THERE  
I'LL BE **LONG GONE**. I'LL DESTROY THIS  
TAPE. I WON'T HAVE A **MOTIVE**. I WON'T  
LEAVE A **CLUE**. I'M JUST AN  
**INNOCENT GUY**.

THEN I THINK I'LL FINISH MY COLLEGE  
EDUCATION. MARRY MY GIRLFRIEND AND  
HAVE A COUPLE OF KIDS. A BOY AND  
A GIRL WOULD BE NICE. LIVE A  
**GOOD AND BLAMELESS**  
LIFE, AND GO TO HEAVEN  
WHEN I DIE.







IT'LL BE NO PROBLEM, I GOTTA  
GIVE MY DODD SOME IT TO ME.  
HE'S GOT A WHOLE COLLECTION.  
HERE'S A GREAT BELIEVER IN A  
GOTTEN'S RIGHT TO HAVE HIM.  
IT'S A GOOD THING LIKE A MILLION  
OTHERS IN THIS CITY.

I'LL DO THE DIEDS... MY DOD  
TAUGHT ME HOW TO SHOOT, SO  
THEY'LL LEAVE THE BARRON.  
I WON'T LEAVE A SHAWING OF  
A DOUBLE-ENDED COIN, A NO  
DOUBLE-ENDED I WON'T LEAVE  
A HADMAN. I'LL JUST LEAVE  
WITHOUT A TRACE.



I MEAN, FOR ALL I KNOW, RIGHT  
NOW HE COULD BE IN HIS SECRET  
BUNKER. SOMEWHERE WHERE  
HE'S IN SECRET. SOMEWHERE  
ELSE. I COULD BE IN THIS TOWN.

BUT I'M SURE HE GOT. 'CAUSE  
HE'S ONE OF THE GOOD GUYS  
AND SPINNING AND INNOCENT  
PEOPLE WOULD BE WORKING.



LEAVING THE BAD GUY  
TO FIGHT THE BARRON  
OF HIS DAYS.

'CAUSE LET'S FACE IT  
CRIME DOESN'T PAY

#### ALAN MOORE

Alan Moore is perhaps the most acclaimed writer in the graphic story medium, having garnered countless awards for such works as *WATCHMEN*, *V FOR VENDETTA*, *From Hell*, *Miracleman* and *SWAMP THING*. He is also the mastermind behind the America's Best Comics line, through which he has created (along with many talented illustrators) *THE LEAGUE OF EXTRAORDINARY GENTLEMEN*, *PROMETHEA*, *TOM STRONG*, *TOMORROW STORIES* and *TOP TEN*. As one of the medium's most important innovators since the early 1980s, Moore has influenced an entire generation of comics creators, and his work continues to inspire an ever-growing audience. Moore resides in central England.

#### BRIAN BOLLAND

After making his professional debut in 1975, Brian Bolland perfected his clean-line style and meticulous attention to detail on a series of popular strips for the British comics magazine *2000 AD*, most notably its signature feature *Judge Dredd*. He went on to illustrate the 12-issue maxiseries *CAMELOT 3000* and *BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE* for DC before shifting his focus to work almost exclusively on cover illustrations. Since then, he has earned a reputation as one of the best cover artists in the industry, and his elegantly composed and beautifully rendered pieces have graced a host of titles, including *ANIMAL MAN*, *BATMAN*, *THE FLASH*, *THE INVISIBLES*, *WONDER WOMAN* and many more.







"Easily the greatest Joker story ever told, **BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE** is also one of Alan Moore's finest works. If you've read it before, go back and read it again. You owe it to yourself."

— **IGN.com**

"...a genuinely chilling portrayal of Batman's greatest foe."

— **Booklist**

### One bad day.

According to the grinning engine of madness and mayhem known as The Joker, that's all that separates the sane from the psychotic. Freed once again from the confines of Arkham Asylum, he's out to prove his deranged point. And he's going to use Gotham City's top cop, Commissioner Jim Gordon, and his brilliant and beautiful daughter Barbara to do it.

Now Batman must race to stop his archnemesis before his reign of terror claims two of the Dark Knight's closest friends. Can he finally put an end to the cycle of bloodlust and lunacy that links these two iconic foes before it leads to its fatal conclusion? And as the horrifying origin of the Clown Prince of Crime is finally revealed, will the thin line that separates Batman's nobility and The Joker's insanity snap once and for all?

Legendary writer Alan Moore redefined the super-hero with **WATCHMEN** and **V FOR VENDETTA**. In **BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE**, he takes on the origin of comics' greatest super-villain, The Joker — and changes Batman's world forever.

Stunningly illustrated, **BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE, THE DELUXE EDITION** has been lushly re-colored by artist Brian Bolland, presenting his original vision of this modern classic for the first time.

**SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS**